

Montgomery County, Maryland Commission on Aging Annual Report 2016



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



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Letter from the Chair of the Commission on Aging

March 2017

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
The Honorable Nancy Floreen

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging is pleased to present its Annual Report for 2016. The Report describes the activities of the Commission as an advisor to County Government and as an advocate for the interests and concerns of older adults and their families residing in the County. The Commission on Aging effectively carries out its responsibilities, including serving as the Advisory Council to the Area Agency on Aging as mandated by the Older American Act.

The Commission on Aging continues to monitor the County's progress on achieving the goals and vision of the Senior Agenda. The Commission was especially pleased that the year ended with the implementation of the WHO/AGE Friendly Montgomery County (AFMC) initiative, an administrative framework requiring county-wide (including partnering with businesses, academia, hospitals and home and community based services, transportation and housing providers, etc.) cross functional communication to develop, coordinate and implement an aging service plan. The Commission had a lead role in exploring and recommending the WHO Age-Friendly structure that was accepted by the County based on two Commission summer studies and presentations to the Commission by experts in the Age-Friendly arena. The former Chair of the Commission chaired the Age-Friendly Strategic Plan workgroup and other Commissioners were members of the workgroup. They provided a framework for an Age-Friendly structure that was accepted by the County. To date the County has created the diverse Age Friendly Montgomery County Advisory Group (AFMAG) consisting of representatives from county businesses, non-profits, academia, county departments, boards and commissions, fire safety, police, emergency management, hospitals and community based services, communications, parks and recreations and others. The County also created 10 Age-Friendly Workgroups based on Age-Friendly domains. The Chair of the Commission serves on the AFMAG and members of the Commission serve on the Age-Friendly Workgroups. In addition, the Commission reviewed its four standing committees and made changes to the scope of the committees, where appropriate, to better align them with the age-friendly domains.

The Commission acknowledges the challenges presented by the transition of leadership at the State level and the impact of the deficits in the FY17 County budget. While budget recommendations this year focused on continuing to improve and enhance both current programs and new efforts, we remain sensitive to economic issues, affecting the County. We are also proud of the partnership we maintain with various Boards, Commissions and Government Agencies and will continue collaborative efforts toward shared goals in 2017.

The Commission thanks County Executive Leggett for your strong leadership and committed actions on behalf of the County's aging population, and the County Council for the interest and support that they provided to maintain and expand programs that serve older adults.

We also give sincere thanks and recognition to the Director of Health and Human Services, Uma S. Ahluwalia and Director of Recreation, Gabriel Albornoz, who co-chair the Subcabinet on Senior Vital Living (now termed the Age Friendly Montgomery Advisory Group) for their leadership and responsiveness to the issues raised by the Commission.

Finally, the Commission expresses its respect and deep appreciation to two individuals who have provided exceptional support and wise guidance, Dr. John (Jay) Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Services and Dr. Odile Brunetto, Director of Area Agency on Aging. Like so many outstanding professionals working for the County, their contributions, invaluable to the Commission have contributed enormously to the wellbeing of older adults in the County. The Commission also acknowledges the outstanding support provided by the following Aging and Disability Services staff: Tremayne Jones, Office Services Coordinator; Pazit Aviv, Village Coordinator; Shawn Brennan Mobility and Transportation Program Manager; Tina Purser Langley, Senior Health and Wellness Coordinator; Lylie Fisher, Caregiver Coordinator and Dennis Linders, Strategy and Planning.

Sincerely,



Noelle Heyman, Chair

Commission Officers

Noelle Heyman, Chair
Isabelle Schoenfeld, 1st Vice Chair
Rudolph Oswald, 2nd Vice Chair
Revathi Vikram, Treasurer
Stephanie Edelstein, Secretary

Committee and Group Chairs

Aging in Place and Community: Charles Kauffman and Miriam Kelty
Commission on Aging Alumni Group: Irwin Goldbloom
Communications and Community Outreach: Barbara Mulitz
and Stephanie Edelstein
Health and Wellness: David Denton and Grace Whipple
Public Policy: John Honig and Rudolph Oswald
Seniors Today Task Force: Barbara Mulitz
Stakeholders Forum: Amoke Alakoye

Commission Members

Helen Abrahams Amoke Alakoye Noureen Chochan Paul Del Ponte David Denton
Tamara Duell Stephanie Edelstein Morton Faller Georgia S. Guenther Noelle Heyman
John Honig Richard Jourdenais Charles Kauffman Miriam Kelty Bonnie Klem
Judith Levy Karen Maricheau Jerry Morenoff Barbara Mulitz Rudolph Oswald
Judith Peres Mary Petrizzo Monica Schaeffer Isabelle Schoenfeld
Hileia Seeger Revathi Vikram Grace Whipple Syed Yusuf

Liaisons to Commission on Aging

Aging and Disability Services: John (Jay) Kenney
Commission on Aging Alumni: Irwin Goldbloom
Commission on Health: Dr. Alan Kaplan
Commission on People with Disabilities: Seth Morgan
Commission on Veterans Affairs: James Campbell
Department of Housing and Community Affairs: Leslie Marks
Department of Recreation: Jeffrey Bourne and Phil Smakula
Department of Transportation: Faisal Khan
Ethnics Affairs Committee: Pat Lesnick
Housing Opportunities Commission: Stephanie Moore
I Kaur Foundation: Mirin Phool
Keeping Seniors Safe: Morton Davis
Maryland Commission on Aging: Maria V. Jimenez
Montgomery County Fire and Rescue: Jim Resnick
Montgomery County Parks and Planning: Pamela Zorich
Office of Community Partnerships: Austin Heyman
State's Attorney Office: Debbie Feinstein

Aging and Disabilities Services/DHHS Liaisons to Commission on Aging

Odile Brunetto, Director, Area Agency on Aging
Pazit Aviv, Villages Coordinator
Shawn Brennan, Mobility and Transportation Coordinator
Lylie Fisher, Caregiver Coordinator
Tremayne Jones, Office Services Coordinator
Jennifer Long, Aging and Disability Resource Line Manager
Tina Purser Langley, Senior Health and Wellness Coordinator
Erin Smith, Program Data Manager

Enabling Legislation

The Commission on Aging, established in 1974, was operated under the auspices of the County Council until August 1987, when its operation was transferred to the Executive Branch. Chapter 27, Article III of the Montgomery County Code created the Commission on Aging under the declared policy of the County to:

- Improve conditions of the aging or elderly in the County;
- Work toward the elimination of restrictions that impeded older citizens from full participation in the mainstream of community life; and
- Assist and stimulate all levels of government and the community to be more responsive to the needs of the County's older residents.

In addition, the Commission on Aging serves as the Advisory Council to the Area Agency on Aging as described in the federal Older Americans Act. Members of the Commission are appointed by the County Executive subject to confirmation by the County Council. Under a section specifying powers and duties of the Commission, there are several provisions outlining a broad spectrum of powers. The following two subsections provide a good example of the breadth of the Commission's power:

The Commission shall have the power...

- (a) To research, assemble, analyze and disseminate pertinent data and educational materials relating to activities and programs which will assist in meeting the needs and solving the problems of the aging; to cooperate with public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals in identifying and solving the problems of the aging; and to develop and conduct, as appropriate, in cooperation with county government, other services and programs dealing with the problems and needs of the aging.
- (g) To advise and counsel the residents of the county, the County Council, the County Executive and the various departments of county, state and federal governments on matters involving the needs of the aging, and to recommend such procedures, programs or legislation as it may deem necessary and proper to promote and ensure equal rights and opportunities for all persons, regardless of their age.

Commission Membership

The Commission on Aging consists of no fewer than 18 members appointed by the County Executive, subject to confirmation by the County Council. Members must be County residents of whom a majority shall be age 60 and older. Members include: those who participate in or who are eligible to participate in programs under the Older Americans Act; local elected officials or their designees; individuals who are or who have been active in government, business, industry, labor, community service, religious, social services, education, and representatives of major organizations or agencies concerned with aging.

Area Agency on Aging

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is responsible for the provision of a continuum of home and community-based services and provides staff support to the Commission on Aging (COA). In conjunction with community partners, the AAA is involved in administering County and State grant awards to contractors for services, public education/outreach, networking, and referrals.

AAAs were established under the Federal Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1973 to respond to the needs of Americans ages 60 and older in every local community. The AAA strives to develop a range of options that allow older adults to choose the home and community-based services and living arrangements that suit them best. The AAA is part of a national network of over 670 AAAs established under the OAA to improve the quality of life for older persons by a network that maintains a holistic view of aging. The AAA are mandated to “foster the development and implementation of comprehensive and coordinated systems to serve older individuals....”

Highlights of AAA Activities in Fiscal Year 2016:

- The Montgomery County AAA was a key partner in the County Executive’s efforts to ensure that Montgomery County is a community for a lifetime. The AAA helped to support the transition of the Senior Sub-Cabinet into the Age-Friendly Montgomery Advisory Group. A three-year strategic plan is being prepared for submission to WHO/AARP.
- The Caregiver Supports Coordinator worked with other governmental agencies and private partners to officially launch the Dementia Friendly America Initiative in Montgomery County in December 2015.
- Staff from the Aging and Disability Services Line, (ADRU) a Maryland Access Point, answered 22,818 calls to assist seniors, persons with disabilities and their families, and provide access to information and needed short-and long-term care services offered both by the County and our nonprofit partners. The ADRU also assisted 424 walk-in clients and performed 395 visits.
- The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program conducted 3,565 visits, provided 2,665 information and consultations with individuals, 1,549 consultations with providers, investigated 209 formal complaints and opened 147 cases. The program has a dedicated volunteer corps of 45 individuals serving 227 facilities.
- The Public Guardianship Program served 104 persons in need of protective services as determined by the courts, constituting almost 1,100 face-to-face contacts with our clients. Additionally, the program conducted nine education and training events reaching over 350 persons.
- The Senior Nutrition Program served 5,158 participants and provided 397,446 meals, both in congregate sites and through home-delivered meals.
- The AAA, via contracts with the Mobile Dentist, provided dental care and dentures to 182 seniors lacking insurance.
- The Nurses Team conducted over 3,000 Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) evaluations which are mandated to enable eligible persons to receive community-based long term Medicaid-funded services.
- The AAA currently provides nurse monitoring services (via its contract partners) to over 2,000 Community First Choice program recipients. These participants receive services via the Community Options Waiver, Community First Choice, or Medical Assistance Personal Care programs.
- The AAA Supports Planning Agency (SPA) currently serves 377 Community First Choice program enrollees.

- The Mobility and Transportation Manager, assisted with contractual bilingual part-time outreach workers, participated in 6 Outreach events focusing on transportation and mobility options, reaching 134 older adults in November 2016, many of whom speak Chinese, Korean and Spanish. These activities are funded via a two year grant from the Council of Government.
- The Health and Wellness program served assisted 600 individuals through health screening sessions and almost 1,200 individuals through health education sessions. The Health and Wellness program also organized falls prevention sessions through volunteer led classes (90 trained volunteer leaders) for “Bone Builders” and a “Matter of Balance” that together served 5,000 individuals. A second place award was received from NCOA for the video about the Bone Builders Falls Prevention program that was produced by a volunteer.
- The Villages Coordinator has helped to start or expand approximately 29 villages in the County. The Village Coordinator received a National Association of Counties (NACO) award for her efforts in supporting villages ■



**Health and Wellness Coordinator, Tina Purser
Langley and COA Chair, Noelle Heyman**



Commissioners attending the COA annual meeting

Commission on Aging Priorities and Activities

COA and Montgomery County as a Community for a Lifetime Update

The Commission believes that Montgomery County is making progress in becoming a Community for a Lifetime as envisioned by the Senior Agenda, which was developed by the Commission and adopted by the Montgomery County Council in 2012. In keeping with the vision and goals of the Senior Agenda, the Commission continues to focus on quality of life for all older adults in the County.

With support from the County Executive and the County Council, the Commission's past advocacy resulted in adoption of the Senior Agenda; continued funding of essential supports and services such as the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and Senior Center Services; as well as the hiring of a Transportation Coordinator, a Village Coordinator, and a Caregiver Support Coordinator. Significantly, in 2014 and 2015, the Commission explored the World Health Organization's (WHO) certified U.S. Age-friendly communities and successfully advocated that the County become part of this international network. The County Executive and the County Council supported this endeavor, resulting in the WHO's invitation to the County to engage in the process toward becoming an Age Friendly Community. The Chair of COA serves on the Age-Friendly Montgomery Advisory Group (AFMCAG) and members of COA serve on the Age-Friendly Montgomery Work Groups. Most recently, the Commission successfully advocated for a part-time Senior Fellow to manage the Age Friendly Montgomery County initiative.

The Commission's work is ever more important as our older population continues to increase, to age, and to become more diverse. In 2015, approximately 205,841, or 14%, of County residents were age 60 or older. By 2040, this population is projected to increase by almost 50%, to 307,532. The population is also aging, with the percentage of residents age 75 and older expected to grow from 6% of the population in 2015, to 11% in 2040. The older population of Montgomery County is also growing more diverse. In 2015, 15% of residents age 60 and older were Asian; 13% were Black or African American; and 9% were Hispanic or Latino.

The County is home to significant numbers of low and moderate income elders: 18% of households headed by an individual age 65 and older have income less than \$20,000 per year. Housing costs are an issue, particularly for renters. For 25% of senior homeowners, housing costs exceed 30% of their income, 51% of senior renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent. Approximately 38% of County residents age 60 and older, the majority of whom are women, live alone.

In 2015, 23% of seniors living in the community reported having at least one limitation in performing activities of daily living. They may require case management, transportation, in-home assistance, dental services, congregate and home-delivered meals, or other services. Respite care is often needed when the senior lives with a caregiver.

The County has also seen an increase in referrals to adult protective services. Referrals increased between FY2012 and FY2016, from 592 cases to 808 cases. The increase in referrals can be attributed in part to a new law requiring banks to report suspected financial abuse, which now comprise 30% of referrals.

COA Operations

The Commission meets monthly, except during the summer, when members are engaged in Summer Studies focusing on specific issues. Members are expected to serve on one or more Commission Committees: Aging in Place and Community, Communications and Community Outreach, Health and Wellness, and Public Policy. These committees also meet monthly.

To help inform the Commission's advocacy and priority activities, both full Commission and Committee meetings frequently include invited guests who share their expertise on relevant topics. Meetings are also attended by representatives from other Montgomery County Commissions, Boards, Committees, Departments, and Agencies, and other stakeholders. All meetings are open to the public. Commissioners may serve as liaisons to other relevant organizations and groups. Commissioners also meet with the County Executive, County Council Members, Department Directors and staff, State legislators, members of the public, and others in order to advance programs, services, and policies on behalf of County seniors.

The COA collaborates with other boards, commissions, and committees, as appropriate and welcomes their representatives at its meetings and as members of its committees.

The Commission's 2016 activities and priorities, including budget priorities, were informed by the goals and recommendations of the Senior Agenda, WHO Age Friendly Community certification, 2015 Stakeholder Meeting and 2015 Summit on Aging, and recommendations from our 2015 Summer Studies, "Commonalities and Differences in Local Government Approaches for Aging in Community" and "Long-Term Care and Supports: Nursing Home Quality." These priorities were health/mental health, protections for vulnerable adults, and aging in place.

As 2016 came to an end, the Commission engaged in the process of setting priorities for 2017, based on recommendations from the Summer Study on Expanding and Enhancing Dental Health Services for Older Adults, along with information gathered in Committees, discussions at the September Annual Meeting, and other communications with stakeholders.

Policy Advocacy

In 2016, the Commission, led by the Public Policy Committee, engaged in numerous advocacy-related activities in its priority areas.

State Advocacy

Members of the Public Policy Committee review bills being considered by the Maryland General Assembly and advocate on those that would impact Montgomery County seniors, taking into account Commission priorities. Commission members testify on various bills, arrange meetings with legislators, and write letters regarding issues of concern.

In 2016, the Commission testified in support of several bills, including two that were passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor. The successful bills included:

- The Asset Recovery for Exploited Seniors Act, which authorizes the Division of Consumer Protection of the Office of the Attorney General to bring a civil action for damages against a specified person who violates specified provisions of law on behalf of a specified vulnerable adult, to recover damages for property loss or damage; and to recover the costs of the action for the use of the Office of the Attorney General. (The Commission has requested that the Governor's FY18 budget include funding for additional staff to implement this law.)
- *The Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act*, which requires hospitals to: provide a patient or patient's legal guardian with the opportunity to designate a lay caregiver who can provide aftercare in the patient's home; as soon as practicable before discharge, notify the designated lay caregiver of the discharge or transfer of the patient to another hospital or facility; and attempt to consult with the designated lay caregiver to prepare him or her for providing aftercare to the patient and provide a discharge plan describing the patient's needs.

The Commission also wrote letters of support on several bills, two of which were passed and signed into law. They include:

- Senior Citizen Activities Center Operating Fund, which increases funding for Senior Centers statewide. In Montgomery County, the additional funds will be used to support dental services.
- Maryland Medical Assistance Program amendment to require the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene under certain circumstances, to reimburse primary care providers for health care services delivered through telemedicine to Medical Assistance recipients.

The Commission also engaged in state level administrative advocacy, including in collaboration with the Commission on People with Disabilities. We wrote to the Maryland Public Service Commission, calling for improved regulations for disabled passengers using ride services such as Uber and Lyft. We urged the State Highway Administration to construct sidewalks along Norbeck Road near Leisure World and Hampshire Village Senior Apartments, to facilitate safe access to buses and other services for residents. We also urged the Governor to include Dental Care for low-income adults in his FY18 budget.

Several Commission members attended the annual United Seniors of Maryland legislative forum, co-sponsored with AARP Maryland and held in Annapolis. The March 2016 event afforded participants the opportunity to hear from speakers including Secretary of Aging Rona Kramer, and to meet with members of the Montgomery County state delegation.

Several Commission members attended the September 2016 Advocacy Training for Boards, Committees and Commissions, sponsored by the Office of the Montgomery County Attorney.

Legislative Breakfast

The Commission held its annual Legislative Breakfast on November 17, 2016. This anticipated event is attended by members of the Montgomery County delegation to the State legislature and/or a staff representative, County agency staff, Commissioners, and guests. It provides the Commission and delegation members the opportunity to share accomplishments the past year and to identify issues and priorities for the upcoming legislative session.

This year, Commissioners Tammy Duell and Mary Petrizzo discussed the 2016 Summer Study on Oral Health Care Needs of Older Adults in Montgomery County, and the consequent recommendations for state legislative advocacy. These recommendations include an increase in Maryland Medicaid funding to cover dental care for adults and the expansion of dental hygienist services to assisted living facilities and other senior living communities.



**Attorney General Brian Frosh addressing the COA
about Identity Theft**



**Commissioner Stephanie Edelstein talking with
Attorney General Brian Frosh**

Commissioners Bonnie Klem and Barbara Mulitz discussed the need for increased funding to support additional DHHS staff positions in Adult Protective Services (APS) and the Public Guardianship program. Both programs are mandated, and both are severely understaffed.

The issues identified at this event will help to inform the Commission's policy advocacy as we move into 2017.

County Advocacy

The Commission recognizes and appreciates the efforts of the County Executive and the County Council to respond to the needs of all older adults in the County, including those who are low-income and/or otherwise vulnerable, and those who are healthier and more vital.

The Commission was pleased to support the County Executive's FY17 Senior Initiative budget enhancements. After several years of cutbacks in services to seniors, the FY17 budget included increases to services for seniors across several departments. These included: increase in funds for Medical Daycare subsidies for additional clients to attend Adult Day Care program; additional funds for mandated Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) evaluations; new funds for a Senior Fellow position to support the County's Age-Friendly Communities initiative; additional funds for operating and staffing a full senior program at the new North Potomac Community Center; additional funds to support Victory Crossing, a mixed-income senior development in Silver Spring; enhancing the Call-n-Ride program by lowering the eligibility age from 67 to 65; additional funds to provide low-income immigrant seniors with in-center and educational field trip activities; and an increase in funding for home-delivered meals

The Commission also advocated successfully for the following budget items:

- Increase in funding for the Montgomery County Respite Services Program.
- Increase in payment rates for Small Group Homes in the Adult Foster Care program
- Increased funding to support a full-time social worker position for the Case Management - Social Services to Adults Program.
- Increased funding to support a full-time Caregiver Support Coordinator.
- Support within the County government structure to implement the Age Friendly Montgomery initiative, including funding for a Senior Fellow Position.
- Exemption for people over 65 years of age from the property tax increase if their income is less than three times the federal poverty rate.

In April, 2016, small groups of Commission members met with County Council members to solicit their support for these items. Some Commission members held additional meetings with Council staff, and the Commission sent letters and made telephone calls to Council members and their staffs to advocate on these priority issues.

After learning towards the end of the budget cycle, how staffing shortages were limiting the capacity of the State's Attorney's Office to prosecute elder abuse cases, the Commission requested funding for two additional staff members in that office. This request was approved by the County Council within the FY17 budget cycle.

The Council added that funding during budget reconciliation. It will support two positions - a legal assistant and an Assistant State's Attorney, in the Crimes Against Seniors and Vulnerable Adults unit.

The Commission engaged in other advocacy on behalf of County seniors, including:

- The Commission supported using funds generated from assessments on UBER and Lyft, for the transportation needs of seniors with disabilities.
- The Commission expressed concern about the lack of attention to senior residents in the County's Comprehensive Economic Strategy (CES), particularly in light of the many positive actions taken by the County Executive and the County Council on behalf of seniors (e.g., Senior Agenda, Senior Summit in 2009 and 2015, establishment of the Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living). The Commission will continue to monitor this issue.
- The Commission wrote to the Council to support development of a strategic plan to end food insecurity in the County, and will continue to monitor that plan as it is developed to ensure that addresses the needs of seniors.

Federal Advocacy

On the federal level, the Commission sent letters to the County's three Congressional Representatives urging them to advocate for reauthorization of the Older Americans Act by the U.S. House of Representatives. We also sent letters to the two Maryland Senators calling for increased funding for Older Americans Act programs.

After years of delay, the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2016 was enacted by Congress, and signed into law by President Obama on April 19, 2016. However, funding of some senior programs took a blow in the proposed FY17 budget. For example, that budget would eliminate the SHIP program, which provides free counseling to seniors and people with disabilities with the growing complexities of Medicare coverage. SHIPs also assist with fraud and abuse issues, billing problems, appeal rights, and enrollment in low-income protection programs. The Commission will urge our representatives in Congress to do all that they can to retain this vital program.

Stakeholder Forum

The Commission did not convene a Stakeholder Forum in 2016. The next forum is being planned and will take place in early 2017, under the working title "Age Friendly Montgomery County: What's in it for You?" Issues to be addressed include housing, transportation, communication, and home and community care.

Information, Outreach, and Partnerships

The Commission continues to collaborate with other Boards, Committees, Commissions, and Stakeholder groups. Several such entities send liaisons to Commission meetings, and some Commission members serve as liaisons to other Boards, Committees and Commissions. The Commission looks for opportunities to collaborate with other group on common issues. In addition, most Commission members are active in groups supporting senior services.

The Commission takes time during many of its meetings to inform members about senior issues. Brian Frosh, Maryland Attorney General; Eileen Bennett, Montgomery County Long Term Care Ombudsman; and Debbie Feinstein, Chief, Family Violence Division, Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, were among the guest speakers at 2016 Commission meetings. Committee meetings also included guest speakers, including representatives from other Boards, Committees and Commissions.

At the Annual Meeting, as part of the Commission's priority setting process, Commission members heard from several County leaders and program managers about their initiatives and issues of concern. Speakers included County Executive Isiah Leggett; Council President Nancy Florreen; Department of Health and Human Services Director Uma Ahluwalia; Department of Recreation Director Gabriel Albornoz; Aging and Disability Services Chief John J. Kenney; Area Agency on Aging Director Odile Brunetto; Department of Housing and Community Affairs Director Clarence Snuggs; and Adult Protective Services Administrator Mario Wawrzusin. Several program managers also provided updates. This information was used to inform the development of COA priorities for 2017.



**Commissioner Charles Kauffman;
Department of Recreation Director Gabriel
Albornoz; Department of Health and Human
Services Director Uma Ahluwalia and County
Executive Isiah Leggett**



**Commissioners Paul Del Ponte, David Denton and
Rudolph Oswald**

Age Friendly Montgomery County

Commission members have been actively involved in the Age Friendly Montgomery County initiative. Commission Chair Noelle Heyman serves on the Age Friendly Montgomery County Advisory Group, and Commission members participate in each of the workgroups. The Commission will continue to participate and to monitor and advise the County as it proceeds to implement the Age Friendly strategic plan.

Dementia Friendly America Initiative

In 2016, Montgomery County joined Dementia Friendly America, an emerging network of cities and states creating an informed, safe and respectful community for people and families impacted by dementia and other cognitive challenges. The County's strengthened services include a new program of collaboration among public safety officers to offer additional support to individuals experiencing cognitive challenges and their families. Several Commission members were actively engaged in developing and launching this initiative.

COA Bylaws Revision

In 2015, the Commission reviewed and updated its 1998 Bylaws. The draft was submitted to the County Attorney in December 2015. The County Attorney's Office thoroughly reviewed the draft and responded by letter in September 2016. The response provided a comprehensive legal analysis that included detailed recommendations for conforming the draft to the Montgomery County Code provisions governing the Commission. The Commission plans to revise the draft Bylaws in early 2017, taking into consideration the County Attorney's advice.

Commission on Aging Committees

A significant proportion of Commission work is accomplished through its committees. Those committees include Aging in Place and Community, Communications and Community Outreach, Health and Wellness, and Public Policy.

Aging in Place and Community

The Aging in Place Committee identified issues and priorities related to the ability of older adults to age in place, including affordability, accessibility, property tax incentives, and transportation. The Committee focused on the pros and cons for seniors of transportation options such as Uber and Lyft. These transportation network providers are not bound by traditional transportation regulations and lack the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles needed to transport older and disabled residents. To help offset these costs, the Commission advocated for a County Transportation Services Fund, which the Council approved. Transportation Network Service providers will collect a .25 surcharge that will be disbursed back to the County quarterly and used to motivate providers to purchase/retrofit accessible vehicles. The Committee also discussed WMATA policies and MetroAccess. Limitations of MetroAccess (cost and consumer satisfaction) were acknowledged. The Committee learned of a WMATA proposal to initiate AbilitiesRide, which will enable riders to use smartphones to make same day reservations. The Committee expressed concern in a letter to WMATA indicating that the proposal benefits only those with financial and technological means.

The Committee also learned about affordable housing and other senior housing options that promote aging in place. AIPC's guest speakers included Leslie Marks, Montgomery County Senior Fellow, who presented on the Montgomery County Senior Housing Initiatives and progress, and Shawn Brennan, Program Manager for Transportation and Mobility, who gave an update on the Transportation Services Network. AIPC activities also included: encouraging the

Permitting Services Department to expand the marketing/publicity of the home modification tax incentive program; working with civic associations and other appropriate partners to encourage state and county pedestrian state and county cross-walk markings to be consistent; supporting the expansion of the Village Rides program and foster ride sharing; and during the final quarter of the year, focusing attention on housing affordability with a view towards more intense work in this area in 2017.

Members participated in Age Friendly Montgomery County workgroups and in the development and implementation of the Age Friendly strategic plan as appropriate.

Health and Wellness

The Health & Wellness (H&W) Committee's 2016 goals included: (1) explore dental health services for underserved seniors; (2) explore mental health outreach and education, and (3) improve the quality of long term care. To learn more about oral health concerns of seniors, the Committee heard from Dr. Alan Kaplan Commission on Health and others. Oral health is an urgent matter for seniors. As a result of their learning, the Committee developed and implemented a Summer Study: Expanding and Enhancing Dental Health Services for Adults Residing in Montgomery County to determine how the Commission can collaborate with other County committees and commissions with the common interest of oral health promotion for individuals in need, as well as explore best practices in other communities. Recommendations from the Summer Study were presented to the County Executive and the County Council and can be found below in the Appendix.

The Committee heard from the following guest speakers: Bozena Skraben, Community Health Outreach Coordinator, Adventist HealthCare; Beth Shapiro, LCSW-C, Director of Social Work, Jewish Foundation for Group Homes to learn more about the mental health needs of senior residents. Members of the Committee also participated in the End of Life Coalition and collaborated with the Primary Care Coalition to learn more about the Nexus Montgomery and WISH Programs. The trial program began in 2016, supporting residents at Elizabeth House with wrap-around health and community based services to help prevent hospital readmissions. The program will open to other communities later in 2017.

Committee members were also active in the development of the Dementia Friendly America Initiative and the Age Friendly Montgomery County workgroups.

In 2017, H&W will work to implement the recommendations arising from the Summer Study and will take the lead on planning for the Stakeholders Forum.

Communications and Community Outreach

The Communications and Community Outreach (CCO) Committee collaborated with other COA committees and the County to facilitate communication about issues and resources of relevance to the senior community. Members participated in the Age Friendly Montgomery County communications workgroup, and provided insight and topics for

the County's media outreach to older adults. The selected topics will be featured in monthly publications throughout the year in the Beacon. The County Budget recently included funds for senior media outreach and the County has designated the Beacon as the recipient of those funds. The topics will include a variety of informative issues and resources available to older adults and their families. Additionally, funds have been added for the translation of these articles in order to reach diverse communities in Montgomery County.

Seniors Today Task Force

The Commission co-produces the Montgomery Cable show, Seniors Today, which continues to present relevant and entertaining programming. This year, guests included Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh, County Executive Isiah Leggett, County Council President Nancy Floreen, Commission Chair Noelle Heyman, and other representatives from County agencies. Topics included financial exploitation, the Senior Summit, Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly initiatives, tax credit and deferral programs, free legal services provided by Maryland Legal Aid, Interages intergenerational programs, SHIP health counseling program, transportation services, Maryland Senior Olympics, and Heritage Montgomery. The May program highlighted Neal Potter Path of Achievement Award winners. Seniors Today airs several times a month and is on-line at <http://montgomerycountymd.gov/ccm/seniorstoday.html> The program is hosted by Austin Heyman.

Public Policy

The Public Policy Committee took the lead on the Commission's advocacy on priority issues at the county, state and federal levels, as discussed in detail under Commission activities, above. The Committee reviewed proposed legislation on the state, county, and federal levels; researched relevant topics as needed; drafted testimony and other written documents; testified before the County Council and State legislative committees; and convened the 2016 legislative breakfast in preparation for the 2017 legislative session in Annapolis.

The Committee's policy advocacy contributed to several successes that will benefit older adults throughout Montgomery County and statewide. They include, at the State level:

- Passage of *The Asset Recovery for Exploited Seniors Act*
- Passage of *The Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act*
- Increase in the Senior Citizen Activities Center Operating Fund, which Montgomery County to support dental services
- Requirement that the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, under certain circumstances, reimburse primary care providers for health care services delivered through telemedicine to Medical Assistance recipients; and, at the County level:
- Increase in funding for the Montgomery County Respite Services Program
- Increase in payment rates for Small Group Homes in the Adult Foster Care program
- Increased funding to support a full-time social worker position for the Case Management - Social Services to Adults Program
- Increased funding to support a full-time Caregiver Support Coordinator

- Support within the County government structure to implement the Age Friendly Montgomery initiative, including funding for a Senior Fellow position.
- Exemption for people over 65 years of age from the property tax increase if their income is less than three times the federal poverty rate.

The Committee learned from the following guest speakers: District 15 Del. Kathleen Dumais; Robert Hill, Deputy Chief, Special Prosecutions Unit, Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office; Seth Morgan, Chair, Commission on People with Disabilities.

2016 Summer Activities

COA Rescoping Task Force

This Summer Activity followed Montgomery County's designation as an Age Friendly Community, and the recognition that the Commission needed to align its scope with the Senior Agenda and with Age Friendly Montgomery County domains. A task force comprised of the CoA Executive Committee and other interested members analyzed the scope and functions of current Commission committees: (1) to determine whether the current committee structure provided a "home" for each of the ten Age Friendly Montgomery County domains, for purposes of monitoring and advocacy; and (2) to make necessary adjustments to the CoA Committee scope.

The Task Force recommended, and the full Commission endorsed, certain changes in the scope and responsibilities of the Committees. Beginning in 2017, the Commission will include the following Committees, which will have the scope/responsibilities described below. These changes were made with the understanding that some topics include elements that could be addressed by more than one committee, and that not all Committee topics within its scope will be addressed simultaneously.

Aging in Place/Community & Planning Committee (Currently Aging in Place and Community Committee). Scope includes -

- Transportation and Mobility
- Housing (including Villages)
- Outdoor Spaces
- Employment
- Civic Engagement and Social Participation
- Security and Safety

Health Planning, Services, & Community Supports Committee (Currently Health and Wellness Committee). Scope includes –

- Health and Wellness
- Home and Community Based Services
- Elder Abuse Prevention.

Communication & Community Outreach Committee.

Scope includes –

- Effective written and oral communications on Commission issues, including technology use and ageism.
- Co-produce monthly cable program Seniors Today to reflect Commission topics of interest.

Public Policy Committee.

Scope includes –

- Identify issues and recommend advocacy positions to the CoA.
- In consultation with other CoA Committees and in accordance with CoA priorities, advocate on budget, program, and policy issues at the County, State, and Federal levels.
- Advocate in collaboration with other groups (e.g., Montgomery County Boards, Committees and Commissions) to increase impact.

Summer Study: Expanding and Enhancing Dental Health Services for Older Adults.

The Commission convened subject matter experts at the County and State levels to discuss the current state of oral health care for older adults who reside in Montgomery County, Maryland. The goals of the summer study were to:

1. Learn about current oral and dental health programs and services available for older adults in Montgomery County, Maryland including capacity and utilization rates as well as needs, gaps and other challenges;
2. Discuss opportunities to enhance and expand dental health services for older adults in the County with special emphasis on low-income older adult residents; and
3. Develop a plan and /or recommendations to enhance and expand services.

The Study included presentations from county dental programs and providers, discussion of ideas and opportunities to enhance and expand dental services to low-income county seniors, and development of a plan/recommendations.

The study resulted in the following recommendations:

Direct Services

1. Offer Dental Health Services Day(s) 1-2 times per year for seniors in Montgomery County. Data from recent dental health services days show cost is approximately \$75,000 to provide approximately \$1,000,000 in care. Need to identify a funding source(s). *Potential Partners: Charities Clinic, local dental groups and providers and county dental clinics.*
2. Examine all County dental contracts. Modify funding based on needs and funding gaps. Review the contract with National Association of Counties (NACo) to see if updates are needed based on additional services offered. *Potential Partners: the mobile dentist and other contracted providers.*
3. Create a pilot program to expand and include dental providers that offer free and reduced fees to seniors. *Potential Partners: Dental schools (to identify new dentists), dental associations, dental groups and dental providers.*

4. Engage the business community. Contact companies to request donation of needed dental products and services. *Potential Partners: Maryland Dental Association.*

Prevention, Education and Public Awareness (Communication)

5. Provide quarterly oral health educational sessions at the County senior and recreational centers. Invite other senior centers located in Montgomery County to participate. Use “Silver Smiles” program as model. *Potential Partners: the mobile dentist, Noah Dubin, home health care organizations and other providers.*
6. Enhance a communication to seniors about oral health needs focusing on prevention, intervention and resources. Build a culture that embodies messages and preventions. *Potential Partners: Seniors Today, Senior Beacon, The Washington Post Health Section, County website—develop “Ask the Dentist forum, Meals on Wheels, NACo, Geriatric Primary Care Practices, JCA, JSS, etc.*
 - Display PSAs focused on prevention to raise awareness. *Potential Partners: Ride-On Buses, Peapod, Manna Food Bank, Home Care Agencies.*
 - Facilitate partnerships with local faith-based organizations. *Potential Partners:* including hospitals that have outreach programs for example—Holy Cross Faith Community Nurse and LINCOS Programs and Adventist Health Ministry Programs. Also, create alliances or partnerships with home health care agencies and others so messages about prevention, intervention and resources reach diverse groups.
7. Work with the Cultural Change Coalition to ensure oral health is included as an essential part of person-centered re. *Potential Partners: Cultural Change Coalition and primary care practitioners.*

Public Policy and Legislative Action

8. Provide input in development of new State Oral Health Plan. *Potential Partners: Office of Oral Health and Maryland Dental Action Coalition.*
9. Support legislation to expand dental hygienists services into assisted living facilities and other senior living communities. *Potential Partners: Maryland Dental Action Coalition (HB 100 Law).*
10. Advocate for funding to be included in the State budget for Medicaid coverage of dental services for adults. *Potential Partners: Maryland Dental Action Coalition, state/other county Commissions on Aging, Montgomery County delegation, United Seniors of Maryland, Anne Arundel Oral Health Task Force and others.*

Strategic Planning

11. Examine current data collected by Montgomery County related to dental health needs/utilization/gaps and use to help inform county planning. If additional data is needed, modify data collected. Perhaps utilize Anne Arundel County Oral Health Task Force summary as a guide.

12. The Commission on Aging's Health and Wellness Committee will continue the work of the dental services summer study. *Potential Partners: Maryland Dental Action Coalition, state/other county Commissions on Aging, Montgomery County delegation, United Seniors of Maryland, Anne Arundel Oral Health Task Force and others.*
13. Provide the Montgomery County Executive and the Montgomery County Council with a copy of the Commission on Aging's Expanding and Enhancing Dental Health Services for Older Adults in Montgomery County final report and recommendations.

COA Plans for 2017

The Commission on Aging will engage in the following activities in 2017:

- Commission and its Committees will meet regularly to implement Commission goals.
- Convene the 2017 Stakeholder Forum.
- Convene annual meeting in May 2017.
- Advocate on priority issues, including budget issues, at the County, State and Federal levels.
- Conduct one or more Summer Studies.
- Host Legislative Breakfast in November 2017.
- Participate in Age Friendly Montgomery County workgroups and monitor implementation of the Age Friendly strategic plan as appropriate. The Commission Chair is a member of the Age Friendly Montgomery County Advisory Group.
- Collaborate with other Boards, Committees, Commissions and other groups as appropriate.
- Revise Bylaws, considering the County Attorney's review.
- Other activities that may be identified.

LOOKING FOR SERVICES FOR SENIORS?



Visit Montgomery Senior Site for information on

- **Caregiving**
- **Consumer Issues**
- **Employment**
- **Health**
- **Recreation and Libraries**
- **Safety**
- **Senior Housing**
- **Taxes and Finances**
- **Transportation**

Montgomery Senior Site is designed to provide information on county services in one easy to find place at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/senior or call 240-777-3000 or dial 311.

Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director

Dr. John J. Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Services

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MARCH 2017

